

The Art of Pastel: From Degas to Redon

THE PETIT PALAIS COLLECTION

15 September 2017 – 8 April 2018



Petit Palais
Musée des Beaux-Arts
de la Ville de Paris

Tuesday – Sunday, 10 am – 6 pm
Late closing: Friday, 9 pm

INFORMATION
www.petitpalais.paris.fr

The Petit Palais is delighted to be presenting for the first time a group of 130 pastels, all from its own collection. This will be an opportunity for visitors to discover a relatively little known segment of the history of the medium through a panorama of the main artistic trends of the second half of the 19th century, from Impressionism to Symbolism. Apart from a few frequently reproduced examples, these extremely fragile works have never been on public display before; and after this special six-month showing they will go back into storage.

Pastel is often thought of as belonging to the 18th century, which was indeed its golden age. But the generations that followed the famous portraitists Rosalba Carriera (1674–1757) and Maurice Quentin de la Tour (1704–1788) looked mostly to other media. Neither David nor Ingres took up pastel. During the 19th century, however, it gradually became a medium in its own right, being appreciated by Romantics like Léon Riesener and Realists who used it for a range of subjects. It was in the last quarter of the 19th century and the early years of the 20th that pastel underwent the complete revival represented by the great majority of works in this presentation at the Petit Palais.

In five sections combining the chronological and the thematic, the exhibition covers the different artistic currents of the period and shows how pastel emerged as a means of experimentation for a certain kind of modernity. It opens in 1800 with Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun's *Princess Radziwill* and closes around 1930 with *The Rose Garden* by Ker-Xavier Roussel, but most of the works on show are from the period 1860–1920. This means visitors will see not only the jewels of the collection – the Impressionist works of Berthe Morisot, Auguste Renoir, Paul Gauguin, Mary Cassatt and Edgar Degas – but also more modish examples by James Tissot, Jacques-Émile Blanche, Victor Prouvé and Pierre Carrier-Belleuse. The high point is a very handsome group of Symbolist pastels by artists including Lucien Lévy-Dhurmer, Charles Léandre, Alphonse Osbert and Émile-René Ménard, together with several remarkable pictures by Odilon Redon.

Visitors will also be able to explore the actual technique of pastel and the business of preserving works on paper; pastels are particularly sensitive to light and cannot be left on permanent display. Made infinitely attractive by its texture and its colours, pastel allows for very rapid execution and stylistic variety ranging from the simple coloured sketch, often a preliminary to a painting, to fully finished works. This is a medium at the crossroads between drawing and painting.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a catalogue raisonné of the Petit Palais pastel collection.

CURATOR

Gaëlle Rio: curator at the Petit Palais, in charge of prints and drawings from the 18th–20th centuries

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CATALOGUE

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DIGITAL BACKUP

An application will be available to visitors. In addition a thematic itinerary allowing for exhibition follow-up will be downloadable from the Paris Musées portal: <http://parismuseescollections.paris.fr/fr>



Charles-Lucien Léandre, *Sur champ d'or*, 1897.
Pastel on canvas. © Petit Palais/Roger-Viollet